

Appl. No. 10/510,525
Response dated April 13, 2006
Response to Final Office action of January 13, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 remain in this application.

I. CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Examiner objects to claims 1 and 20 stating that it is unclear what the applicant is referring to by the limitation of "a power supply system selectively supplying the source of energy to the pumping system". As best understood by the examiner, this is a reference to the ability to modulate the choke valve 74 to alter the pressure of hydrocarbons after passing through power generator 72.

The Applicant respectfully points out that the claim limitation reads that the power supply system is capable of selectively supplying power to the pumping system. The pumping system pumps at least one of the desired individual phases of the multiphase flow to a delivery point. Thus, using the embodiment shown in Figure 5, one example of this may be the power drive unit 37 selectively supplying power to at least one of the pumps 39, 40, or 41. In this case, the term "selectively" would include, but would not necessarily limited to, the ability to select whether or not to provide power, to at least one of the pumps 39, 40, 41 during operation. The Applicants therefore traverse the objection and submit that no correction need be provided. The Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as currently written overcome the Examiner's objection and requests that the Examiner remove the objection.

II. CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 USC § 102

A. Examiner's Statements

The Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 12-15, 20, and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Hofmann* (U.S. Patent 5,117,908).

B. Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 12-15, 20, and 23

Claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 12-15, 20, and 23 of the present application require a power supply system that uses the source of energy from the pressure reducing means to selectively supply power to the pumping system. *Hofmann*, however, discloses reducing the pressure of the flow with a prime mover 8 in the form of an energy recovery turbine (ERT). The ERT is attached to the pumping system by a common shaft that powers the pumping system that includes the centrifugal pump 14 and the compressor 15. As the turbine turns, it necessarily powers the pumping system due to the rotation of the common shaft. *Hofmann* thus does not disclose selectively supplying a source of energy to the pumping system with the prime mover 8 as required by the claims as the power

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may not be selectively turned off during operation. In Figure 4, *Hofmann* does disclose the attachment of an electric motor 18 for driving the centrifugal pump 14 and the compressor 15. However, when used to power the centrifugal pump 14 and the compressor 15, the electric motor 18 is powered by electricity from an outside source, and not from the prime mover 8. The Applicant therefore respectfully submits that the rejection is unsupported by the art and requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection with respect to claims 1, 2, 8, 9, 12-15, 20, and 23.

III. CLAIM REJECTIONS - 35 U.S.C. § 103

A. Examiner's Statements

The Examiner rejects claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of *Hofmann* in view of *Dean, et al.* (U.S. Patent 4,848,475). The Examiner also rejects claims 4-7 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann* in view of *Bencze* (U.S. Patent 4,848,471). The Examiner also rejects claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann*. The Examiner also rejects claim 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann* in view of *Ditria, et al.* (U.S. Patent 6,197,095). The Examiner also rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann* in view of *Appleford, et al.* (WO 01/20128). The Examiner also rejects claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann*, in view of *Appleford, et al.*, as applied to claim 18, and further in view of *Ditria, et al.* The Examiner also rejects claim 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann*, in view of *Ditria, et al.* The Examiner also rejects claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Hofmann*, in view of *Dean, et al.*.

B. Claims 3-7, 10, 11, 16-19, 21, and 22

The Examiner rejects claims 3-7, 10, 11, 16-19, 21, and 22. The Applicant repeats the remarks made above for claims 1 and 20. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 20 are in condition for allowance. As claims 3-7, 10, 11, 16-19, 21, and 22 depend from either independent claim 1 or 20, the Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are in condition for allowance as well by being dependent on allowable independent claims. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner remove the rejection with respect to the dependent claims 3-7, 10, 11, 16-19, 21, and 22.

IV. AMENDMENTS MADE NOT RELATED TO PATENTABILITY

The Applicant amends claim 7 to more clearly, correctly, and properly claim the invention and not for purposes of patentability. These statements are not an admission that the other

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amendments were made for purposes of patentability, meant to be limiting in any way, or meant to be all-inclusive of amendments not made for purposes of patentability.

V. STATEMENT REGARDING CLAIMS

The Applicant comments on the allowability of the claims by addressing the Examiner's comments in this paper as well as previously during the prosecution of this application. By doing so, the Applicant is in no way limiting its ability to argue additional points of novelty regarding the independent claims or dependent claims at a later date.

CONCLUSION

The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration the pending claims and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite the resolution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

In the course of the foregoing discussions, the Applicant may have at times referred to claim limitations in shorthand fashion, or may have focused on a particular claim element. This discussion should not be interpreted to mean that the other limitations can be ignored or dismissed. The claims must be viewed as a whole, and each limitation of the claims must be considered when determining the patentability of the claims. There may also be other distinctions between the claims and the prior art that have yet to be raised, but that may be raised in the future.

Unless the Applicant has specifically stated that an amendment was made to distinguish the prior art, it was the intent of the amendment to further clarify and better define the claimed invention and the amendment was not for the purpose of patentability. Further, although the Applicant may have amended certain claims, the Applicant has not abandoned its pursuit of obtaining the allowance of these claims as originally filed and reserves, without prejudice, the right to pursue these claims in a continuing application.

If any fees are inadvertently omitted or if any additional fees are required or have been overpaid, please appropriately charge or credit those fees to Conley Rose, P.C. Deposit Account Number 03-2769 (ref. 1600-010900) of Conley Rose, P.C., Houston, Texas.

Respectfully submitted,

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Collin A. Rose
Reg. No. 47,036
CONLEY ROSE, P.C.
P. O. Box 3267
Houston, Texas 77253-3267
(713) 238-8000
(713) 238-8008 Facsimile
ATTORNEY FOR APPLICANT

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